

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

MOTOR VESSEL KITION

ALLISION WITH I-10 BRIDGE,

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA,

FEBRUARY 10, 2007

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Docket No.: DCA07FM013

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Interview of: KYLE LeBLANC

U.S. Coast Guard  
Marine Safety Unit  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Monday,  
February 12, 2007

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to  
notice, at 4:39 p.m.

BEFORE: LIAM LARUE

## APPEARANCES:

LIAM LARUE  
National Transportation Safety Board

LT. COMMANDER SHANNON GILREATH  
U.S. Coast Guard

CAPTAIN BARRY STRAUCH  
National Transportation Safety Board

BILL WOODY  
National Transportation Safety Board

CHIEF RAY BALL  
U.S. Coast Guard

PETTY OFFICER ROBERT FEUS  
U.S. Coast Guard

MICHAEL F. VITT, ESQ.  
General Counsel  
E.N. Bisso & Son, Incorporated

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I N T E R V I E W

(4:39 p.m.)

MR. LARUE: Okay. Good afternoon. It is Monday, February 12th. It is 4:39. This is Liam LaRue from NTSB and we're interviewing Mr. Kyle LeBlanc in regards to the motor vessel Kition allision with I-10 bridge. Let's just go around and introduce ourselves for the tape. Behind me.

LT. COMMANDER GILREATH: I'm Lieutenant Commander Shannon Gilreath, the Commanding Officer of Marine Safety, Baton Rouge.

MR. STRAUCH: Okay. I'm Barry Strauch with the NTSB.

PETTY OFFICER HUGHES: Petty Officer Third Class Robert Hughes, U.S. Coast Guard.

CHIEF BALL: Chief Ray Ball of United States Coast Guard.

MR. VITT: I'm Michael F. Vitt, General Counsel for E.N. Bisso and Sons, Incorporated.

MR. LARUE: Hey Bill, could you leave that open?

CAPTAIN LeBLANC: Kyle LeBlanc, Captain of the Gladys B.

MR. LARUE: Just entering the room, we've got Mr. Bill WOODY from NTSB as well.

## INTERVIEW OF KYLE LeBLANC

BY MR. LARUE:

Q. All right. Let's just start you off. Could you

1 please tell me your age for the record, sir?

2 A. 27.

3 Q. And could you give us a brief introduction to your  
4 maritime experience? Tell us if you would give a little bit on  
5 how long you've been working on ships?

6 A. I've been in the maritime since I was 18. I have a  
7 100 ton masters and a 200 ton mates license. I went into a  
8 Masters (indiscernible) inland and western rivers, a master of  
9 towing for inland and western rivers, radar observer for  
10 western rivers, bridge management, fire fighting.

11 Q. What was your first job in the maritime industry?

12 A. Tugs.

13 Q. And what was your position?

14 A. Deckhand.

15 Q. How long did you do that for?

16 A. Three years.

17 Q. Okay. Continue on, up until present.

18 A. Captain next three and a half years.

19 Q. And what's that for?

20 A. On tugs.

21 Q. Okay. And on the day of the accident, what vessel  
22 were you onboard?

23 A. The Gladys B.

24 Q. And your position?

25 A. Captain.

1           Q.    Okay.  Can you give us a little bit of information  
2   about the Gladys B., the length, horsepower, anything you can  
3   tell us about the boat?

4           A.    She's 3,000 horsepower.  She's about 114 feet long, I  
5   think, probably about 30 feet wide.

6           Q.    Okay.  If you could just go back to the day of the  
7   accident and if you would start from when you got the call to  
8   go work at, assist at the Apex and just kind of take us through  
9   the whole story, as best as you remember it?

10          A.    Okay.  We started, headed down about 5:45 to the  
11   ship, it was on for 6:00 Terminal C out of Apex Oil.  There was  
12   a delay.  We didn't get our first command until 7:05, which was  
13   to shove half straight in, while she let go all of its lines to  
14   the dock.

15                And then at around 7:30 or so, 7:40, he told us all  
16   to stop, slide back as far back on the stern as we could get,  
17   myself and the Margaret Cooper, told the tug on the bow to all  
18   stop and to take it back halve.

19                And when he was ready for us, he told us to shove  
20   half straight in and then hard straight in.  Then we proceeded  
21   like that until he got broad side in the river and the Peggy H.  
22   asked the pilot, or informed the pilot, that the needed to let  
23   his line go immediately because he was in danger.  And, at that  
24   point, we stopped and we ran up to the bow because he collided  
25   with the bridge, to check his bow out, because the Peggy H. had

1 to get out of there.

2 And from there, he proceeded to drop it down to meal  
3 buoys, he put it in the anchorage. And that's where we sat, at  
4 anchor, until the ship at meal anchorage came out and then we  
5 shifted it back into the meal anchorage.

6 Q. Okay. What was your first indication that something  
7 was wrong?

8 A. When the Peggy H. asked for his line to be given back  
9 to him.

10 Q. Okay. Have you assisted other vessels coming off the  
11 Apex dock before?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Approximately how many times?

14 A. Let's see, about three or four times.

15 Q. Could you describe how you maneuvered those vessels,  
16 or how you assisted in the maneuvering of those vessels?

17 A. We, well in accord, as normally, we're on the stern  
18 quarter, normally, we were on the stern Quarter and the Peggy  
19 was on the bow, and they'll back them around and we'll shove  
20 the stern up. Normally they will slide back below the bridge,  
21 or go up and turn.

22 Q. Out of those three or four times, how many times,  
23 could you tell us, did you slide back, how many times forward,  
24 did you ever turn in the same area like you tried to do this  
25 time?

1           A.    No, I never turned anybody like that off the dock.  
2   They normally shift it back or they've gone up to turn it.

3           Q.    Okay.  Who gives you your commands?

4           A.    The pilot.

5           Q.    Okay.  Do you have a choice whether or not you have  
6   to follow those commands?

7           A.    We follow everything he tells unless I feel it puts  
8   my boat in danger.  Then, I will tell him that I don't agree  
9   with it and gear from that.

10          Q.    Were there any problems communicating with the pilot  
11   on this day?

12          A.    No.

13          Q.    How were you communicating with the pilot?

14          A.    A VH radio, channel 77.

15          Q.    Okay.  Can you tell us anything about the weather  
16   that day?  What were the weather conditions?

17          A.    Clear.  It didn't seem (indiscernible) other than the  
18   river being a little high, with a little more current, that was  
19   about the only thing, as far as weather conditions, that were  
20   different.

21          Q.    What you estimate the current to be that day?

22          A.    Maybe about three knots.

23          Q.    What side of the vessel do you generally assist with?

24          A.    Anywhere from 350 feet to the (indiscernible) ships  
25   all sizes.



1 Q. Who decides what tugs are in which position?

2 A. The pilot.

3 Q. Okay. What position do you normally --

4 A. All, pretty much on the quarter, always on the  
5 quarter, or drop on the inside of the ship to the other bow, to  
6 shove the bow around.

7 Q. Is there a reason for that?

8 A. Just get the bow around a little quicker.

9 Q. Is there a reason that your tug, as opposed to like  
10 the Peggy or the other one?

11 A. The Peggy has more horsepower than us, so they're  
12 always on the bow. They like more horsepower on the bow.

13 Q. Okay. Was there anyone else on the tug with you?

14 A. At that time, the engineer was, he was in the galley.

15 Q. So was it just you and the engineer onboard?

16 A. Well, a deckhand, too. He was in bed.

17 Q. So there was no one on the bridge with you at that  
18 time?

19 A. No one was on the bridge with me.

20 Q. Okay. Were there any injuries onboard your ship?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay. Could you go into a little bit more detail  
23 about what happened, what you might have seen, as it was coming  
24 down towards, right before it hit the bridge?

25 A. Oh, I didn't see much before it hit. When we were

1 backing (indiscernible) and he told us hard, I'm at an angle  
2 like this, trying to hold him from crossing. So, I'm looking  
3 square down at my nose, to make sure I don't slide off the  
4 ship. And I had another tug underneath me, the Margaret. So  
5 I'm watching him and I'm watching myself. I'm not paying too  
6 much attention to the bow. When the Peggy asked for his line  
7 to get in, that's when I felt the ship stop and that's when I  
8 noticed what happened. And he then he told us to stop. We  
9 backed off of him and moved around to the bow.

10 Q. Which side of the bow did you go up on?

11 A. The starboard side.

12 Q. All right. Was there anything else unusual about the  
13 maneuver at any time that you remember?

14 A. No. He had us in the hold position, you know, one on  
15 the bow, and two on the quarter and when the river's up, that's  
16 how they, most every pilot turns them up there, either out of  
17 Exxon, or Apex, or wherever.

18 Q. Were there anything unusual about any of the commands  
19 that the pilot was giving?

20 A. No.

21 BY CHIEF BALL:

22 Q. Okay, Captain, was there any pre-conference, like  
23 arrangements with the pilot, did the pilot mention on how he  
24 was wanting to maneuver the motor vessel?

25 A. No. No, he didn't tell us.

1 Q. Was there any pre-conference amongst the other  
2 tugboat captains?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay. All right. Captain, how long have you been on  
5 the Gladys B. itself?

6 A. On the Gladys B., a little more than -- it was about  
7 two months ago I was put on the Gladys.

8 Q. Okay. As the Captain, right?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. What is your watch rotation like, or should I  
11 say, as they refer to it as a hitch?

12 A. My hitch is when we have jobs. So, I'm off in  
13 between jobs to get my rest --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- and do whatever they want me to do.

16 Q. Okay. Do you have some temper days, where there are  
17 dedicated days off, no matter what kind of jobs there are?

18 A. Yes. I work a seven and seven schedule.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yes, seven and seven.

21 Q. And whenever you're on for the seven days, do you  
22 stay on the vessel?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. Captain, were you well rested before you took  
25 control of your vessel?

- 1           A.    Yes.
- 2           Q.    Okay.  Do you have any physical problems?
- 3           A.    No.
- 4           Q.    Okay.  Do you wear glasses or --
- 5           A.    Contacts.
- 6           Q.    Okay.  Were you were wearing your contacts at the
- 7   time of the incident?
- 8           A.    My glasses.
- 9           Q.    Okay.  You were wearing glasses.  Okay.  Do you
- 10   take -- before the incident, during the incident, and after,
- 11   have you taken any new medications?
- 12          A.    No.
- 13          Q.    Okay.  And you stated that nobody else was in the
- 14   pilothouse with you up on the bridge?
- 15          A.    No.
- 16          Q.    The handling of your vessel, did you notice anything
- 17   in particular with the handling of the vessel?
- 18          A.    No.
- 19          Q.    Anything wrong with the handling of the vessel?
- 20          A.    No.
- 21          Q.    Any mechanical problems with the vessel?
- 22          A.    No.
- 23          Q.    Okay.  All navigation equipment working okay?
- 24          A.    Yes.
- 25          Q.    Any equipment on the vessel that was not working

1 properly?

2 A. No.

3 Q. On the day of the incident, how many days were into  
4 your hitch?

5 A. What day was the accident on?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Saturday.

7 CAPTAIN LeBLANC: Saturday. I came on Monday, so  
8 five days in.

9 BY CHIEF BALL:

10 Q. Okay. Did the pilot say anything to you at all right  
11 when you got underway during the incident, after the incident?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Just normal orders. You know, he would tell us, you  
15 know, slow, hard, straight in, normal commands.

16 Q. Was there any damage done to your vessel --

17 A. No.

18 Q. -- the Gladys B.? And like we mentioned before, no  
19 injuries?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Other than the Peggy H., talking about releasing her  
22 line from the bow of the vessel, from the bow of the motor  
23 vessel, did you hear any other radio communications to indicate  
24 that something might be wrong before --

25 A. No.

1 Q. -- the incident?

2 A. No.

3 CHIEF BALL: Okay. I don't have any more questions.

4 BY MR. WOODY:

5 Q. You were asking about a pre-conference. Is a pre-  
6 conference a customary thing that you do?

7 A. No.

8 Q. It's not? Okay.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

10 CAPTAIN LeBLANC: No.

11 BY MR. WOODY:

12 Q. (Indiscernible) if he has a pre-conference with the  
13 tugboats or not. You said it's not customary.

14 A. No. I mean if the ship is on the west bank, they'll  
15 tell us turn on the right helm. If they're on the east bank,  
16 they turn on a left helm. So they never, unless they're going  
17 to do something other than that, that's extraordinary odd, then  
18 they'll say something. But other than that, it's just normal  
19 commands.

20 Q. You said you were alone on the bridge. What does the  
21 crew of your vessel consist of?

22 A. Three men. A captain, an engineer and a deckhand.

23 Q. One deckhand?

24 A. Uh-huh.

25 Q. What were the other two people doing?

1           A.    The deckhand was just relieved of his watch and the  
2 engineer was coming on watch.  The deckhand was in his bed.

3           Q.    So the engineer would be a deckhand if he's on watch?

4           A.    Uh-huh.

5           Q.    I was not quite clear.  You said, one of your first  
6 words was shove, shove in.  Explain it to me.

7           A.    To let go of the lines, to hold it in place, when he  
8 starts to let go of his lines to the dock, so that he doesn't  
9 fall back or come off of the dock until he's ready --

10          Q.    Okay.

11          A.    -- he'll have us shove half or hard straight in.

12          Q.    And hard straight would be --

13          A.    Full power.

14          Q.    Okay.  Now, was there any reason for the location of  
15 your vessel?  Before it was, you discussed that the Peggy H.  
16 was always on the bow because of its power.

17          A.    Right.

18          Q.    Well the other two vessels moved to the mid-ship --

19          A.    Uh-huh.

20          Q.    -- and the Peggy, too?

21          A.    Yes, I was mid-ship and the Margaret Cooper was on  
22 his quarter.

23          Q.    Was there any reason for the two of you being that --

24          A.    Yes.  They slide, they'll slide the middle tug to the  
25 stern quarter also, just to help push, try and push the stern

1 up as much as possible to keep the current from taking them.  
2 Then, once he gets broadside, to keep the current from taking  
3 him just completely down river broadside.

4 Q. Okay. When you slid down, did you realize you were  
5 going to try to turn the vessel in that location?

6 A. Uh-huh.

7 Q. Did that cause you any concern?

8 A. Not really. I mean, I was following the pilot. If  
9 he wanted to turn it off right there, maybe he thought he could  
10 do it. I mean, that's --

11 Q. A pilot decision.

12 A. -- a pilot decision, yes.

13 Q. That's not yours.

14 A. Right.

15 Q. I got the impression that when you first went there,  
16 you went down clear, did you expect?

17 A. What did I expect him to do? Either slide it below  
18 the bridge or go above.

19 Q. How far above?

20 A. At least a mile or so above the bridge.

21 Q. And then start to turn?

22 A. Right.

23 MR. WOODY: Okay.

24 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1:

25 Q. You said the first indication of a problem was when



1 the pilot asked the Peggy H. for his lines?

2 A. The Peggy asked for his lines.

3 Q. Okay. Could you explain what that means? I'm not  
4 really familiar with it.

5 A. The Peggy H. had one line up to the starboard bow and  
6 he was backing the ship, the nose of the ship around, the bow  
7 of the ship around.

8 Q. Uh-huh.

9 A. And normally when you get done, the pilot tells them  
10 all stop, when he's done with his turn, and I'm going to send  
11 somebody to let your line go. You don't ever really ask for  
12 your line back unless you're in trouble.

13 Q. Okay. So what that signified to you was --

14 A. Yes, something was wrong.

15 Q. Okay. And how long from that point until the  
16 accident occurred?

17 A. No much longer, I'd say maybe another minute or so,  
18 at the most.

19 Q. How long did the whole event take, from the time you  
20 got the first order from the pilot that --

21 A. The first one was at 7:05. It was, had to be around  
22 7:40 around the collision time, or so.

23 Q. And throughout that time, the only thing that struck  
24 you as unusual with this and everything else was normal?

25 A. No, I was -- yes. I mean, I was paying attention to

1    what I was doing and following the orders of the pilot.

2           Q.    Okay.  How many tugs were there on the vessel?

3           A.    Three.

4           Q.    Okay.  How many different pilots have you worked with  
5   in all at this port?

6           A.    Since I've been on the boats all together or --

7           Q.    Yes, as a Captain, how many different pilots have you  
8   worked with?

9           A.    Oh, hundreds.

10          Q.    Oh.

11          A.    Yes.

12          Q.    Have you ever worked with this pilot before?

13          A.    I don't know, it's not in my head.  I can't remember  
14   now.

15          Q.    Okay.  How did this pilot seem, compared to the other  
16   pilots that you've worked with?

17          A.    Same.  I mean, it's -- I mean, they just come on,  
18   you're with them for maybe 30, 40 minutes on the turn, and  
19   maybe an hour on the land.  And you know, that's about it.  I  
20   mean, other than them just giving us commands, we really  
21   don't --

22          Q.    I see.

23          A.    -- that's about it.

24          Q.    You said you would tell a pilot if you disagreed with  
25   something, --

1 A. Well, if I thought I was going to be in trouble.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Like, if it could mean trouble in a close quarter  
4 situation or something like that.

5 Q. Okay. In this particular instance, why didn't you  
6 say anything to the pilot?

7 A. He didn't have me in a bad situation. I was back on  
8 the quarter and (indiscernible).

9 Q. Have you ever said anything to a pilot, have you ever  
10 experienced a situation where you did say something because you  
11 were in danger, --

12 A. No.

13 Q. -- your boat was in danger?

14 A. Never.

15 Q. Okay. You said that you were supposed to, you  
16 started at 5:45 expecting a 6:00 start?

17 A. Yes, 6:00. It was supposed to be a 6:00 sail, right.

18 Q. But there was a delay?

19 A. Right.

20 Q. What was the cause of the delay?

21 A. I don't know. They didn't tell us.

22 Q. Okay. And I'm just going to follow up on a couple of  
23 questions. You said you wear glasses?

24 A. Uh-huh.

25 Q. What do you wear glasses for? Is that for near

1 vision or distance vision?

2 A. I wear them all the -- I wear contacts all the time,  
3 just glasses early morning or at night.

4 Q. Okay. You just wear when you drive and to watch a  
5 movie or something?

6 A. Uh-huh.

7 Q. Okay. You don't wear them to read?

8 A. Yes. No, I keep my contacts in all the time. Just  
9 early morning or at night I just wear my glasses instead of  
10 popping the contacts in. If you keep them in too long, they  
11 dry out and they get all irritable on you.

12 Q. I'm just going to follow up on one other question.  
13 You came on duty on Monday?

14 A. Uh-huh.

15 Q. What time did you get up on the day of the accident?

16 A. On the day of the accident?

17 Q. Uh-huh.

18 A. About 5:15, when the cranked up the boat to let it  
19 warm up.

20 Q. Okay. And do you remember about what time you went  
21 to sleep the night before?

22 A. About 8:00.

23 Q. Okay. So you slept from 8:00 until 5:00 in the  
24 morning?

25 A. Uh-huh.

1 Q. How about Friday? Do you remember what time you got  
2 up on Friday?

3 A. About 9:30 or so.

4 Q. Okay. And what time did you go to sleep on Thursday  
5 night?

6 A. Thursday? I don't remember.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: I don't have any more  
8 questions. Thank you.

9 BY MR. WOODY:

10 Q. You said it was unusual for the tug to ask for its  
11 line back.

12 A. Uh-huh.

13 Q. Did you hear any urgency in the Captain of the Peggy  
14 H.'s voice?

15 A. Yes. Yes. When he asked for his line back, it was  
16 like, I need to get out of here. This is not good.

17 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #2:

18 Q. Okay. Are you on any medication?

19 A. No.

20 Q. How far -- you were on the starboard quarter. How  
21 far was the stern away from the dock?

22 A. I'd say anywhere between 50 to 80 feet off.

23 Q. Were you moving -- what way were you moving, relative  
24 to the dock?

25 A. The dock, he was going away from it.

1 Q. Okay. And up or down river.

2 A. He was going down river.

3 Q. Okay. What about speed? Was it happening pretty  
4 quickly or slowly?

5 A. Kind of a medium pace, I would say.

6 Q. Okay. Now, the speeds that you were turning and  
7 coming down, were you comfortable with that, did that seem  
8 normal to you?

9 A. Uh-huh.

10 BY CHIEF BALL:

11 Q. Captain, what was your previous order/job, prior to  
12 this one?

13 A. It was sometime Thursday.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I didn't do a job all day Friday. And that was the  
16 first job given to me Saturday.

17 Q. Okay. And normally with your vessel, is it normally  
18 just to assist deep-draught vessels?

19 A. Yes, assisting ships --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- docking, undocking, in and out of anchorages,  
22 anything for a ship assist.

23 Q. Any other kind of jobs that you and the vessel do,  
24 other than what you mentioned?

25 A. Not really, no.

1 BY MR. LARUE:

2 Q. What do you do when you're not on a job, when you're  
3 on duty?

4 A. Paperwork or relax, rest, eat.

5 MR. LARUE: Does anybody else have any questions for  
6 him?

7 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #3:

8 Q. I said I wasn't going to ask a question, but I do  
9 have a couple of questions after listening to what you had to  
10 say. I'm sorry. Here's what I've got for you.

11 Do you recall what the draught readings were onboard  
12 the ship, not your ship, but on the tank ship?

13 A. It was 42 feet. I know that because I remember  
14 seeing (indiscernible).

15 Q. And where did you get that information from? Did you  
16 see it visually? Or did you hear it over the radio or --

17 A. Just heard it.

18 Q. From the pilot or from the ship or --

19 A. From the pilot.

20 Q. And I thought I heard you say, and if I'm wrong, tell  
21 me this, that the pilot had you and the other tug --

22 A. Uh-huh.

23 Q. -- pushing on the aft, you said aft starboard side  
24 of --

25 A. The upper quarter.

1           Q.    -- that maintains the position of the stern, as the  
2 head of the ship turns.

3           A.    Uh-huh.

4           Q.    As that was going on, --

5           A.    Uh-huh.

6           Q.    -- did you recall, or were you able to see where you  
7 were, in relationship to the pier? By that I mean, were you  
8 keep the stern at the same location? Were you going up river  
9 or were you going down river with the current? Do you recall?

10          A.    We were kind of, we were falling down some. I mean,  
11 not at a rapid pace. I mean, you're always going to fall down  
12 some. I mean, we're not going to hold it, I mean, completely  
13 in position. That's not going to happen. He was falling some.  
14 But I mean, not at a rapid pace.

15                   And as far as where he was to the bridge pier, I was,  
16 like I said, I was facing, I had a lot of angle on it to try  
17 and push him more towards the dock, try and help him keep from  
18 running out.

19          Q.    And when the vessel struck the bridge, --

20          A.    Uh-huh.

21          Q.    -- was the ship, was the stern below the head of the  
22 ship?

23          A.    No.

24          Q.    I mean, was it downstream of the head?

25          A.    No, it was parallel.



1 Q. He was parallel, he was going under the bridge?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. And after that happened, you said you came off  
4 the stern?

5 A. Right.

6 Q. The pilot said come off the stern?

7 A. Yes. All stop and me and the Margaret both ran up to  
8 the bow to catch it as it was coming off the pier.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #3: Okay. That's all the  
10 questions I had. Thank you.

11 BY MR. VITT:

12 Q. I just have a couple of follow up questions.  
13 Captain, what is the policy with regard to the pilot's orders  
14 when you hear them? What do you do when you hear the pilot's  
15 orders?

16 A. We repeat the command right back to him. Whatever he  
17 tells us, we repeat it as he said it exactly back to him.

18 Q. Did you do that this time?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Did you follow the commands of the pilot in this  
21 instance?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. You said you felt well rested. In this instance, you  
24 had virtually nothing to do on Friday.

25 A. Right.

1           Q.    You just did whatever the routine boat activities  
2    were?

3           A.    Right.

4           Q.    Did you take a nap on Friday?

5           A.    No, I didn't take a nap on Friday.

6           Q.    Did you feel the need to?

7           A.    No, I didn't.

8           Q.    Okay.  You felt well rested?

9           A.    Yes.

10          Q.    Was there any mechanical or other difficulties with  
11   your vessel during the incident?

12          A.    No.

13          Q.    All of your equipment worked properly?

14          A.    Yes.

15          Q.    There was nothing to prevent you from following the  
16   pilot's orders?

17          A.    No.

18               MR. VITT:  That's it.

19               MR. LARUE:  Okay.  Anybody else?

20               CHIEF BALL:  Yes.

21               BY CHIEF BALL:

22          Q.    Has you vessel had any recent repairs or problems, I  
23   guess we could say within the last six months?

24          A.    No.

25          Q.    So no recent repairs, no problems at all?

1 A. No.

2 MR. STRAUCH: I just have a couple of questions for  
3 you.

4 MR. LARUE: Barry Strauch.

5 BY MR. STRAUCH:

6 Q. Please excuse my ignorance, but you're both from the  
7 same company?

8 A. That's correct.

9 Q. Okay. And how many tugs are there in your company?

10 A. About 14.

11 Q. 14. And how many captains are there?

12 A. There are 24 at the present moment, I believe.

13 Q. I'm just going to ask you about repeating the pilot's  
14 orders.

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. Is that (indiscernible) do that?

17 A. No, just stamped, sees them.

18 Q. If it's not written, how do you know it's been  
19 received?

20 A. Because that's the way it's been taught.

21 Q. Okay. Who taught you that?

22 A. My superior captain when I was learning how to run  
23 boats.

24 Q. Okay. Was this a formal program?

25 A. Formal as in --

1 Q. A formal curriculum that you went through, the way he  
2 taught you?

3 A. I mean I was --

4 Q. You just followed him around for a while and he --

5 A. No, I mean I worked under several different captains  
6 until then I was sent to be evaluated by another captain and I  
7 was turned loose as a captain.

8 Q. Okay. Do you know of anybody who applied to be a  
9 captain from a deckhand position who was not selected?

10 A. A lot of people, yes.

11 Q. Do you know why?

12 A. Because they couldn't do the job.

13 Q. It is a selective procedure?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Did any captain, when you were learning under the  
16 captains, did they say anything to you about these pilots,  
17 about how to respond to pilots?

18 A. No, just repeat the words back that he gives them.

19 Q. But every captain you worked with did the same thing?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Was there any variation in it?

22 A. No.

23 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. All right, thank you.

24 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #3

25 Q. Let me ask a follow up question about a draught

1 question I asked a while ago. What is the deepest draught  
2 vessel you can recall turning off Apex dock?

3 A. I can't remember.

4 Q. Do you recall one --

5 A. There was one --

6 Q. -- 42 feet or close to 42 feet?

7 A. Yes, there was one a couple months ago that had, I  
8 remember, they had ordered it at night and they got canceled  
9 because it has a deep draught and it was only supposed to sail  
10 during daylight hours with that much draught.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And he went down below the dock to turn it, he came  
13 below the bridge and then he turned it once he got below the  
14 bridge.

15 Q. Okay. That was a couple months ago, like December?  
16 Was it high water, low water?

17 A. No, the river wasn't up then.

18 Q. You said it's not up. You mean like under 15 feet,  
19 under 10 feet?

20 A. No, a normal river stage.

21 Q. What's normal to you? I mean I'm asking that, I know  
22 that's a tough question to answer. I know what's normal to me.  
23 Normal to me is --

24 A. Is like three foot on the New Orleans gauge.

25 Q. Okay. Which gauge do you use when you're working

1 here in Baton Rouge, do you use the New Orleans gauge or do you  
2 use the Baton Rouge gauge, when you're looking at the river  
3 stage?

4 A. I normally look at the New Orleans gauge.

5 Q. Okay. Do you recall what the New Orleans gauge was  
6 on --

7 A. No.

8 Q. -- on Saturday?

9 A. No, I don't.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #3: Okay. That's all I have.

11 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #4:

12 Q. Were the conditions that you encountered, the river  
13 conditions that you encountered, you said the river was a  
14 little bit high and the current was about three knots.

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. How challenging were those conditions, in your  
17 experience or how unusual were these conditions?

18 A. It makes it, are you asking if it makes the job  
19 tougher? Is that what you're --

20 Q. Well my question is, how unusual are these kinds of  
21 conditions? How often have you encountered conditions such as  
22 these?

23 A. Every high river season. I mean normally it flows in  
24 cycle. The river will come up, then it will go down, it will  
25 come back up, and then go down. Since like six and a half

1 seven years I've been out on the river, the river will go up  
2 and down. So, if that helps.

3 Q. So it's fair to say the conditions were not unusual  
4 for this time of year?

5 A. No.

6 BY CHIEF BALL:

7 Q. Captain, whenever the loaded vessels pulled off the  
8 dock --

9 A. Uh-huh.

10 Q. -- okay, just being proactive or not, what would have  
11 expected the pilot to order? Were you expecting to go a little  
12 bit north, let it drop, or did you expect that -- I know you  
13 didn't have a pre-conference agreement (indiscernible) what  
14 were you expecting to happen next?

15 A. I was expecting him to either go up or starting to  
16 turn.

17 Q. Okay. And does your vessel have AIS?

18 A. Uh-huh.

19 Q. Okay. Was it on during the time?

20 A. Uh-huh.

21 MR. VITT: I have one follow-up question.

22 BY MR. VITT:

23 Q. Captain, are you aware of the company's Responsible  
24 Carrier Program Manual?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Is there a copy of that aboard?

2 A. Yes, there is.

3 Q. Would it surprise you to learn that there is written  
4 directives in that manual relating to the repeat back of pilot  
5 commands?

6 A. No.

7 MR. VITT: I'd be happy to provide a copy of that.

8 MR. WOODY: You said what, please?

9 MR. VITT: We have a manual that --

10 MR. WOODY: You'll give us a copy, is that what you  
11 said?

12 MR. VITT: I'll be glad to provide it.

13 MR. WOODY: Okay.

14 MR. VITT: It's on every vessel.

15 CHIEF BALL: And that's for all crew or just captains  
16 to follow?

17 MR. VITT: The procedures in the manual are for  
18 everyone to follow.

19 CHIEF BALL: Okay.

20 MR. VITT: And we have some documents here which  
21 relate to Captain LeBlanc, including some evaluations of his  
22 training, where he was given above-average recommendations by  
23 his training captains. In fact, it is stated in there that he  
24 is an exceptional boat handler. And I'd be glad to provide you  
25 with that document. There's two of them in there.



1           MR. LARUE: All right. Well, thank you very much for  
2 coming down. It is now 5:15. And if you could acknowledge  
3 that this was being recorded?

4           CAPTAIN LeBLANC: Yes, I acknowledge.

5           MR. LARUE: All right. Thank you, sir.

6           (Whereupon, at 5:15 p.m., the interview in the above-  
7 entitled matter was concluded.)

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:           Motor Vessel Kition  
                                  Allision With I-10 Bridge  
                                  Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
                                  February 10, 2007  
                                  Interview of Kyle LeBlanc

DOCKET NUMBER:           DCA-07-FM-013

PLACE:                    Baton Rouge, Louisiana

DATE:                     February 12, 2007

was held according to the record, and that this is the  
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been  
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kimberly J. Zogby  
Transcriber